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Bring Transgender Day of Remembrance to Your School

Nov. 13, 2013 ? Matthew Yeung

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Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is on Wednesday, November 20th. TDOR was started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith during a vigil for a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. It's a commemorative day dedicated to individuals who have died due to anti-transgender prejudice, and it's an important opportunity for Gay-Straight Alliance clubs to celebrate the lives of heroic individuals like Rita Hester [2].

This year, with transgender students and rights under attack ? as we saw just last week when 18-year-old Sasha Fleischman was set on fire for wearing a skirt [3] ? it?s essential that GSAs show our support for transgender and gender nonconforming students, like Sasha's classmates did.

Below are a few of the ways that my GSA honors TDOR, and I hope these ideas inspire you to take action in your community.

1. This day is an opportunity for the community to come together in order to remember the lives of trans* and gender nonconforming individuals who have died as a result of harassment and violence. To commemorate, my GSA will have a location on campus to honor their lives and their bravery. This place will be adorned with the pictures and names of these individuals ornamented with delicate flowers and personal, intimate pieces. The

day will be illuminated with a candlelight vigil on campus and a moment of silence at the end of the day.

2. TDOR marks the end of Transgender Awareness Week?a week to inform and address the pressing issues of transphobia this community faces. It is important to raise visibility around youth who identify as trans* and gender nonconforming in school. Members of my GSA will wear white throughout the week in support of all gender identities and speak in a knowledgeable discussion on misconceptions peers may have in order to bring clarity to the LGBTQ community.

3. Most importantly, TDOR is a day to advocate and become involved. Use media and social networking to publicize peace and equality by using the hashtags #TDOR and #TransWk, and share pictures from your GSA events and posters with the additional hashtag #GSAs4Justice. In my GSA, we campaign with positive posters throughout our campus and ask our peers to speak truth to power, and work to change the world. We remind our community to contact political representatives encouraging protective legislation for all Americans, and to stand by important laws like the School Success and Opportunity Act [4].

GSA Network has a Transgender Day of Remembrance page [5] with further resources for TDOR.

Here are some pictures from our TDOR sign-making session:

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Links:
[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/about-us/youth-council
[2] http://www.gender.org/remember/people/ritahester.html
[3] http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Oakland-attack-shines-light-on-agender-issues-4978977.php#page-1
[4] http://supportallstudents.org/
[5] http://www.gsanetwork.org/resources/gsa-actions-events/transgender-day-remembrance